2:Armellada--5 M-5 (1933-1945) 1946 SS16 Pemon SS16
Venezuelan Indians SS4

P /4 cont./

101 Therefore, for the reasons given, I propose to missionaries and ethnographers that they use preferentially this word Pemón

P when talking, in common, of these tribes or of their language.

161 6. From the census published in the Boletín de la Sociedad
114 de Ciencias Naturales, Vol. VIII, No. 53, and which contains,
[113] almost complete, the account of "Exploración del río Paragua y sus affluentes /Exploration of the Paragua River and Its Tributaries/," and from another census included in an unpublished memoir about "Exploración de Kamarata, Tiriká y Urimán /Exploration of Kamarata, Tiriká, and Urimán/," and published by Mons. Gómez in the memoir of the Ministry of Interior Affairs, 1941, and through Father Baltasar de Matallana in his book Labor de los PP. Capuchinos en la Misión del Caroní /Work of the Capuchin Fathers in the Mission of the Caroní/, it turns out that the number of Pemón Indians is only 2,500 (two thousand five hundred).

Quite a revelation for those who believe in uncounted hordes of Indians!

The number of Indians is generally exaggerated for the reasons that we point out in the already referred to "Exploración del río Paragua"; there was a missionary who, taken in, in good faith, by the accounts of the Creoles, stated that there

V were on the Gran Sabana no less than 14,000 Indians.

161 Although it only be in passing, I shall avail myself of this
114 opportunity to state that the official census, which computes the number of natives existing in Venezuela at 130,000, is highly exaggerated. Through personal knowledge and other trustworthy data, I can state positively that the number of Indians

P does not reach 60,000.

101 7. The Pemón have as bordering tribes the Makuchí and the Uapichana toward Brazil; the Uaika, Seregóng, Patamona,

P etc., toward British Guiana; the Sapé, Arutaní, and Pauaná

● [175] toward the Paragua River. In addition we must bear in mind
[177] that since four centuries ago the Spaniards, Portuguese, Dutch,

101 /4 cont./
175 French and English have been propelling their respective cultural
177 influences toward the heart of Guiana.

123 8. Since when I talk about these Indians I might seem
114 partial because of the great affection which I have for them and which they similarly have for me, I prefer to yield the floor to the illustrious ethnologist of Stuttgart, who asserts that the Taurepán Indians are the most pleasant, intelligent, /5/ and even the most physically perfect among all of the natives whom he came to know in his many excursions through the South American continent.

157 In a propaganda article I recall having written: "These Indians are pleasant in their dealings, in their manners, and in their language; they are hospitable, they are suspicious but never hostile toward strangers; they have a great love for their land, for their rivers, and for the places where they live, and they are very fond of pondering its beauties and like it very much when others praise them."

Elsewhere I also wrote and must repeat here: "With regard to their intellectual qualities I believe, as do most missionaries, that these Indians are not dull of wit nor lacking in morality. They have undoubtedly an excess of imagination with the consequences thereof, this being a characteristic of all who live in direct contact with, and as though absorbed by, virgin nature. The lack of stimulus toward all that is outside their ancestral standard or canon of life has given rise to their being called lazy or indolent, which we believe an unjust bad report."

114 9. The ethnographic or racial characteristics of the Pemón Indians can be examined in these words, which in the interest
[262] of greater brevity I copy from Dr. Simpson: "They subsist
[276] principally on cassava and ají; and they use tobacco; they use
[411] blowguns and poison arrows; they poison rivers to catch fish;
[226] they build semipermanent houses and sleep in hammocks;
[342] originally they did not wear clothing or only a simple loincloth;
[513] formerly they practiced empollamiento /"breeding, hatching"/
[291]

114 Williams' fine grammar and vocabulary of the Makuchi language is particularly valuable among studies in British Guiana. Perhaps the work of Farabee should also be mentioned as a source for comparative material, but it has been severely criticized on many points and contains virtually nothing beyond a series of physical measurements that is not obtainable in more detailed and more accurate form from other students.

101 121 Such, then, is the general racial, linguistic, and cultural picture into which the Kamarakotos fit and such are the main outlines of anthropological studies with which this monograph is to be integrated.

Historical Notes

175 131 The Kamarakotos appear in written records at a relatively late date. Search of maps purporting to cover the area where they live, from de Bry's map of 1599 down to those of the present time, has not revealed the name of the tribe on any map earlier than 1840, when it appeared on Codazzi's "Carta del Cantón de Upata." Since that date the word Kamarakoto, spelled in several different ways, has appeared on most maps including tribal names in this region. The exact positions given to the name on various maps differ by as much as five hundred kilometers, but it would be profitless to go into this point in detail. The changes in position all appear to be accidental or based on poor evidence and they certainly do not reflect any known migration of the tribe or exact knowledge of its location at any given time.

175 Probably the earliest record of Indians called Kamarakotos, although it has only recently been published, is that of Fray Ramón Bueno, a Franciscan missionary who was stationed with the Orinoco missions from 1785 to 1804 and who left a manuscript description of Guayana written between 1800 and 1804 and published in Caracas in 1933. This curious and valuable work includes the following passage (p. 85 of the printed edition):

"Los Camaracotos, Guayanos y Guaicas, son naciones mezcladas; los primeros y últimos se fugitivan continuamente a los montes y los Guayanos, siendo, los más, criollos, vuelven a los montes a sacarlos. De estas naciones tienen algunos pueblos los RR. PP. Capuchinos Catalanes del Bajo Orinoco y sin embargo de la sujeción con que los tienan, les dan bastante en que pensar: los hacen andar vestidos, a ellos con calzón y camisa y a ellas con fustan terciado; teniendo para el efecto un hato de común cada pueblo, cuyo producido invierten en esto y gastos de entradas a los montes, verificando cada ano una."

175 101 This information, interesting as it is, is extremely vague and it is by no means certain that the Camaracotos of this account are really the forerunners of the Kamarakotos studied in the present paper. The passage gives no exact

175 information on the location of the "Camaracotos" of that time, but the inference from their association with the Akawais and reduction by the Catalán Capuchins is that they lived a long distance, probably to the northeast, from the present home of the Kamarakotos. The "Guaicas" of this account were doubtless Akawais.[5] There is, as I shall mention below, some slight evidence that the Kamarakotos did come from the northeast in post-discovery times, but certainly if they were really reduced to mission towns and forced into clothes around 1800, both the memory and the effects of this reduction had been completely lost a century later. Moreover, their present linguistic, physical, and cultural affinities are very definitely with tribes that now live east and south of them, into British Guiana and Brazil, and for whom movement from the north is improbable. It is improbable that our Kamarakotos are as nearly related to the Akawais, with which Fray Ramón Bueno's account associates them, as they are to the Makuchis and certainly the relationship is far less close than with the Taurepanes. With all of this, it is doubtful whether the account really refers to the ancestors of the present day Kamarakotos. It might refer rather to some other northern branch of the Arekunas, who are not mentioned under that name, than specifically to the particular tribal unit to which the name has now been limited or been transferred. The appearance of the name is certainly interesting, but not clearly significant. The other information given has no real ethnographic interest in any case, an unfortunate circumstance, since some of the remarks on other tribes in the same work are of the greatest ethnographic value.

114 Search of many works of travel has not revealed to me any first-hand account of the Kamarakotos between 1804 (if that account is first-hand and does refer to them) and 1938. No one previous to 1938 appears to have given a circumstantial account of a visit to them and reliable information was limited to the bare name and the fact that they lived somewhere on or near the Caroní. [131] The maps do give some reason to believe that by 1850, more or less, they lived in the same general region now occupied, whether or not they lived there before that time. The indefatigable student Koch-Grünberg added that they are Arekunas and gave three words of their dialect, but he also gave a few other hearsay details that were not correct and so did little to make them truly known.[6]

As far as the scientific world is concerned, the actual discovery or rediscovery of the Kamarakotos should perhaps be dated only from the Phelps-American Museum expedition of 1938, since the members of this party were the first definitely to place on permanent record any notice of first-hand contact with the tribe. This was done by Tate (1938), along with some photographs of these Indians, whom he called simply "Arecunas." His brief popular note gave no data of particular anthropological value but did finally put the tribe definitely on record. This expedition had as its antecedents the discovery of Auyán-tepúi (and of the Kamarakotos as well) by James Angel a few years

5, 6 [see footnotes on p. 306, category 116 – Analyst]